

## **TEXAS FEDERAL WOMEN'S PROGRAM HIGH SCHOOL FEMALE RECRUITMENT PLAN**

### **Background:**

One goal of the Federal Women's Program (FWP) is to improve the employment opportunities for women with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The latest analysis of Texas Workforce by Professional, Administrative, Technical, Clerical, and Other (PATCO) Equal Employment Opportunity Group indicates that Texas NRCS is under-represented in all professional categories in regard to females with the exception of American Indian/Alaskan Native. The Texas NRCS Annual Affirmative Employment Program Accomplishment Report by fiscal year documents this disparity. The recruitment of highly qualified females in all professional series is needed to meet the goals in the Affirmative Employment Plan for Texas.

In the past, Texas NRCS never had a formal recruitment plan for hiring females. We have not previously had the opportunity to develop a comprehensive recruitment plan to reach our intended target for recruiting professional female employees.

This plan provides a mechanism to identify, recruit and employ high potential females for the NRCS. This plan can also serve as a model for the recruitment and employment of other under-represented groups.

During fiscal year 2008, a special emphasis was placed on the recruitment of Asian American/Pacific Islanders. At the request of the Texas Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) the plan was expanded to include both males and females of that Race National Origin (RNO) group in addition to females of all RNO groups.

### **Concept:**

The concept is to provide these young females with exposure to the NRCS and natural resource conservation early in their high school career. Hopefully, this exposure will motivate these employees to become involved in natural resource conservation and tailor their college academic career accordingly

High potential female high school students will be employed. This will allow an evaluation period for both the employees and the NRCS. There will be no guarantee made to these employees concerning future employment at this time.

**Process:**

High potential female high school students, who are at least 16 years of age, will be identified and recruited throughout the state. Employees will be hired as a GS-1, Soil Conservation Aid under the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP).

District Conservationists in the local field offices will identify high potential female recruits. Input will be solicited from agriculture teachers, school counselors, Soil and Water Conservation District directors, FFA Teachers, and 4-H leaders and others.

Interested females will submit an “Application for Employment with NRCS – STEP” form to the local District Conservationist by **December 12, 2008**. A copy of the application can be accessed on the FWP section of the Civil Rights portion of the Texas NRCS Web Site.

The District Conservationist will complete an “Interview /Assessment – Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP)” form for each applicant and submit it with the student’s application to the FWP Liaison Dexter J. Svetlik, Assistant State Conservationist Operations (ASTC-O), 101 South Main Street, Temple, TX 76501 by **December 26, 2008**. A copy of the Interview/Assessment form can be accessed on the FWP section of the Civil Rights portion of the Texas NRCS Web Site.

A subcommittee of the Texas FWP will evaluate the applications and make recommendations for employment to Management and Human Resources in the Temple State Office by **January 14, 2009**. The number of qualified applicants that will be employed will be determined by the state budget.

Applicants selected for employment, District Conservationists and the appropriate Assistant State Conservationist (ASTC) F.O. will be informed of the selections, reporting date, etc. by **January 31, 2009** by the Human Resources Staff. Applicants that were not selected will also be notified.

Selected employees will report to work when they get out of school for summer break and work through mid-August when school starts up again.

At the end of the summer employment period, the District Conservationist and the employee will complete a “STEP Supervisor/Student Evaluation” form to document the results of the work experience. A copy of the form can be accessed on the FWP section of the Civil Rights portion of the Texas NRCS Web Site.

One copy of the completed form will be returned to Diane Arnold; District Conservationist; County Rd. 101, P.O. Box 744; Port Lavaca, TX 77979 for analysis. The FWP Committee will provide a summary analysis to the State Conservationist documenting success or pitfalls of this recruitment effort (i.e., number of STEP employees to be retained another summer, number planning to pursue a bachelors degree in agriculture or natural resources, etc.). A second copy of the completed STEP Supervisor/Student Evaluation will be routed through the appropriate Zone office for submission the Human Resources staff in Temple.

Employees selected for the STEP may be employed for more than one summer contingent on successful performance and budgetary constraints. A STEP employee will not need to reapply to work during subsequent summer breaks during high school and prior to enrollment in college.

If a STEP employee wishes to continue to work for NRCS after enrolling in college, they will need to apply and be selected for conversion under the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP).